CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for modifying a software application, comprising:

2   identifying the operator of the software application;

3   acquiring an operator profile responsive to the identified operator;

4   setting a threshold value;

5   configuring a functional interface responsive to the operator profile;

6   monitoring the operator's use of the software; and

7   modifying the functional interface when the threshold is exceeded.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein setting a threshold comprises

2 determining the number of times that a novice operator initiates a particular function

3 offered by the software application.

1   3.   The method of claim 1, wherein setting a threshold comprises

2 determining the number of times that a novice operator initiates a particular interface

3 dialogue offered by the software application.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein setting a threshold comprises

2 collecting a plurality of parameters associated with the operator profile to generate a

3 skill score.

1   5.   The method of claim 1, wherein monitoring the operator's use of the

2 software comprises maintaining a log of operator functional selections.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, wherein configuring a functional interface

2 responsive to the operator profile includes modifying at least one interface associated

3 with the software.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein modifying the functional interface

2   when the threshold is exceeded comprises moving functional selections to a higher-

3   level interface within the software.

1   8.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   storing the operator profile prior to responding to an operator request to

3   terminate the software application.

1   9.   The method of claim 5, wherein maintaining a log of operator

2   functional selections comprises updating the operator profile.

1   10.   The method of claim 6, wherein modifying the at least one interface

2   comprises adjusting the availability of a function.

1   11.   The method of claim 7, wherein the modification comprises the

2   addition of a functional push-button to the higher-level interface.

1   12.   The method of claim 9, wherein monitoring the operator's use of the

2   software comprises comparing the sum of each log entry with an associated threshold

3   value.

1   13.   The method of claim 10, wherein the modification comprises removing

2   an unused functional selection from the interface.

1   14.   The method of claim 10, wherein the modification comprises adding a

2   previously withheld function to the interface.

1   15.   The method of claim 11, wherein the modification comprises moving

2   an interface activated by a pop-up menu selection to a dialogue window.

1   16.   A computer based software modification system, comprising:

2   means for receiving information reflective of the identity of an operator of a

3   software application;

4   means for receiving information responsive to the operator's use of the

5   software application;

6   means for determining a threshold value; and

7   means for automatically modifying an interface associated with the software

8   application responsive to when a software usage parameter exceeds the threshold.

1   17.   The system of claim 16, wherein the means for receiving information

2   responsive to the operator's use comprises communicating with a history log

3   containing a sum reflective of the instances that the operator has selected an

4   associated function.

1   18.   The system of claim 16, wherein the determining means comprises

2   analyzing the opinions of representative users of the software application regarding

3   familiarity with the operation of an interface.

1   19.   An interactive software based system, comprising:

2   a user operable input device;

3   a user interface coupled to the input device, the user interface operable to

4   receive at least one identifier associated with an operator of a software application, the

5   user interface programmed to receive an operator profile associated with the operator;

6   a usage monitor coupled to an output of the user interface, the usage monitor

7   programmed to record instances of operator function selections;

8   a usage logic coupled to the output of the usage monitor, the usage logic

9   programmed to compare at least one selection threshold with an associated function

10   selection sum, the usage logic programmed to generate an output signal indicative of a

11   condition where the associated function selection sum exceeds the associated selection

12   threshold; and

13   an interface product manipulator programmed to modify a software application

14   interface that contains associated functional controls.

1   20.   A computer-readable medium, comprising:

2   logic for identifying an operator of an associated software application;

3   logic for obtaining information reflective of the operator's use of the software

4   application over a current and previous operating sessions;

5   logic for updating the information reflective of the operator's use;

6   logic for comparing the operator's use with at least one threshold; and

7   logic for automatically manipulating a software application interface

8   responsive to a condition when the operator's use of a functional control exceeds the

9   at least threshold.